

SNOHOMISH COUNTY CONSERVATION FUTURES PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 2, 2013

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

JACKSON BOARD ROOM

**8TH FLOOR, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: City Councilmember Randy Lord (Large City Representative), Mayor Carla Nichols (Small City Representative), County Councilmember Dave Somers, County Councilmember Stephanie Wright.

Staff: Dianne Bailey, Park Property Administrator, Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation; David McConnell, Planning Assistant, Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation; Geoffrey Thomas, Legislative Analyst – Operations, Snohomish County Council; Sharie Freemantle, Legislative Analyst, Snohomish County Council.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson

Chairman Somers called the April 2nd special meeting of the Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board (CFPAB) to order at 3:35 p.m. Chair Somers introduced Board Member Randy Lord to make a special presentation to the board on the proposed revisions to the scoring system. Board Member Lord then presented his consensus driven decision making model and showed how it could be used for scoring projects. Discussion and debate followed and the board members explored the model.

2. INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Board

There were no new board members, but staff who were present were introduced.

3. APPLICATION RANKING CRITERIA

Randy Lord

Board Member Lord began his presentation by asking the board members to consider the essential questions of why the board evaluated project proposals. He explained that these questions would then help to drive the decision making process. The essential questions for the Decision Making Analysis Tool are:

1. Why are we here?
2. Who is helping make the decision?
3. What are the mandatory criteria? (Must have)

4. What are the optional criteria? (Want to have)
5. How should ranking work?
6. What are the alternatives?
7. What are the scoring alternatives?

Board Member Lord Made went on to define the assumptions he used in developing his model. He showed a Venn diagram along with the list of questions with three overlapping circles, one with Parks, one with SWM, and the last with Conservation Futures and explained that Parks, SWM, and the Conservation Futures Program had overlapping but distinct needs and started to make the point that the Conservation Futures program should clearly define what eligible projects are and are not.

Board Member's Somers, Wright and Program Manager Bailey disagreed with this assumption and explained that the RCW's provide fairly specific definitions for what kinds of projects can be funded under the program. They also pointed out that the SCC mirrors the RCW's in terms of the kinds of projects that can be funded in Snohomish County. Some clarifying examples were discussed.

Board Member Nichols asked Board Member Lord if the model evaluated the question – "can this land be purchased or acquired some other way outside of the Conservation Futures program?" Discussion followed on the idea that if the CFPAB was having a hard time deciding which projects to fund and if funds were limited, could this question be asked and used as a deciding factor when determining the projects to recommend funding for.

Board Member Lord answered that the model does have the ability to evaluate this question. He gave the following example, if there are two competing and roughly equally projects, and if one had an alternative funding source that could be tapped in place of Conservation Futures funds for its acquisition, could the CFPAB then decide to give the other project which lacked the funding alternative Conservation Futures funding and thus allow both projects a fighting chance to be acquired? Yes, this was possible and probably desirable.

Board Member Lord then began to fill in the Consensus Based Decision Making Model with several hypothetical projects to demonstrate how the model works. Scoring criteria will need to be discussed more and agreed upon by Board Members and Staff. Scoring for questions will be 0 – 10 (a minimum of 1). Also, some questions will be presence/absence or yes/no questions. Board Member Lord then showed how the model uses changing color coding and graphing to show the effects of decision making on the model's recommended ranking of projects.

Board Member Lord also discussed how he interpreted the definition of several key terms in the application questions for scoring purposes. "Regional" and "multi-jurisdictional" were discussed as possibly being similar enough to combine. Also, the geographic area and scale of "community-wide" was also discussed. He explained that the terms needed to mean the same thing to all Board Members in order to evaluate projects effectively by consensus.

Board Member Somers indicated that he was uncomfortable with the direction the discussion on scoring criteria and with the distinction between the “must have” criteria and the rest of the criteria.

Discussion followed with staff and board members on the meaning of multi-jurisdictional benefit, community benefit & regional benefit.

Board & Staff Questions/Discussion Points:

- Are the 7 criteria all “must haves” or is the only “must-have” that the project fits the definition of a conservation futures project as defined by SCC and the RCWs
- What are jurisdictional entities and how are they defined for the program? Jurisdictional. Entities could include: Federal, State, County, Cities, districts;
- How is community defined? City limits and associated UGA; regional – a large area of Snohomish County or larger?
- Why not use the 8 as selection criteria and have a check box for each?
- Each criterion has been added to the matrix to match SCC letters A – H.
- The board discussed the difference between a complete project and a continuum of a project (examples: Japanese Gulch with multiple phases vs. a single acquisition);
- Should weighting of criteria be used and if so, how should it be applied to the scoring criteria?
- How should past geographic distribution of conservation futures projects be considered in the current scoring system? After discussion, the board decided to include in the current scoring system and on the application.
- A 2005 change to the RCW’s (RCW 84.34.230) was discussed. The change requires that any property acquired by conservation futures programs must be addressed in the Snohomish County buildable lands inventory. Staff is currently researching this issue.
- Is a willing seller mandatory? After discussion, the consensus is “yes”. The reason for requiring a willing seller letter in the application is to improve the efficiency of the process. In the bond funded round of the grants, the bond funds must spent in three years. The willing seller letter does not specify price but instead indicates a willingness to consider a property sale and enter into negotiations. A listing for sale can also satisfy the requirement of documenting a willing seller.

Manager Bailey read a letter from CFPB Board Member Dan Bartelheimer who was absent. The letter addressed his concerns on the scoring process and with the bond funded grant round. Discussion followed and Chair Somers noted that members of the “fish” and “agriculture” communities are mixing the debate over land use with the discussion of the conservation futures program.

Additional discussion points related to the letter include:

- As a county, do we want to have many different venues throughout the county? Or, should we allow a focus on one or more areas of the county?
- A project that scores highly on numerous criteria should rise to the top where as a project that scores on only a few should rank lower in the scoring process. However,

the board doesn't want to tie its hands by ranking criteria as this will potentially restrict policy options.

4. PROPOSED APPLICATION PACKAGE

Dianne Bailey

The proposed application package was discussed briefly and a draft of the grant application package was distributed to the board to review prior to the May 1st meeting.

Discussion points for the application package:

- How do we document how we determined the weighting system for decision making?
- Does the board pre-score the applications and then use the matrix?
- An open meeting process must be followed so the board should, first pre-score, then hear presentations, then share scores and place into matrix and discuss, and finally make award recommendations.
- The board may want to shorten presentations due to large number of expected applicants.

5. POTENTIAL APPLICATION SCHEDULE

Dianne Bailey

A draft schedule for the bond and application process was discussed briefly at the end of the meeting and will be presented at the May 1st meeting.

6. REVIEW TIME AND DATE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING IN MAY

Board

The next meeting of the board will be at 3:00 p.m. on May 1st in the Jackson Board Room.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Board

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.